



Department of
Children's Services



Foster Parent Training Course Catalog

Parent Learning & Development

Tennessee Department of Children's Services
Office of Learning & Development
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July 1, 2015



About

The Foster Parent Training Program offers learning opportunities that support adoptive, foster, and kinship parents in their effort to provide a safe, nurturing, and loving environment for the children in their care.

Training Goals

- to give foster parents the information needed to handle routine matters such as medical and psychological care, clothing needs, education, and visitation with the birth family
- to provide foster parents with the skills needed to handle problems as they arise
- to develop problem-solving and teamwork skills
- to teach foster parents the required ethical and legal standards for compliance
- to assist foster parents in anticipating the negative, critical, or distrustful attitudes that foster children often exhibit
- to identify elements of the foster child's behavior that can be attributed to the experience of being a foster child
- to share with prospective foster parents the experiences of veteran foster parents with particular emphasis on building positive relationships with birth families and DCS staff

Training Requirements: First Year Post-Approval

Traditional Foster Parents

In the first year after the home study approval date, active foster parents/caretakers who are serving children in state's custody must complete 14 hours of continuing education in:

- Working with the Education System (2 hours)
- Helping Children Make Transitions (3 hours)
- Parenting the Sexually Abused Child (3 hours)
- Child Development (2 hours)
- Cultural Awareness for First Year Foster Parents (1 hour)
- Working with Birth Parents (3 hours)

Kinship Parents

In the first year after the home study approval date, active kinship parents/caretakers who are serving children in state's custody must complete 17 hours of continuing education in:

- Working with the Education System (2 hours)
- Helping Children Make Transitions (3 hours)
- Parenting the Sexually Abused Child (3 hours)
- Child Development (2 hours)
- Cultural Awareness for First Year Foster Parents (1 hour)
- Kinship Family Dynamics (3 hours)
- Kinship Family Role Conflict (3 hours)

Foster Parents caring for Youth adjudicated Delinquent: In the first year after the home study approval date, active foster parents/caretakers who are serving the child/youth who have been adjudicated Delinquent must complete 20 hours of continuing education in:

- Parenting the Youthful Offender (incorporates Working with Birth Parents) (9 hours)
- Working with the Education System (2 hours)
- Parenting the Sexually Abused Child (3 hours)
- Helping Children Make Transitions (3 hours)
- Child Development (2 hours)
- Cultural Awareness for First Year Foster Parents (1 hour)

Training Requirements: Second Year Post-Approval

Training requirements for foster parents during their second year of approval may follow one of two tracks:

Traditional Track

Foster parents (traditional or kinship) following the traditional training track during the second year of fostering must complete 14 hours of training in:

- CPR & First Aid Refresher (4 hours)
- Medication Administration Refresher (2 hours)
- Working with the Education System¹ (2 hours)
- Fostering Positive Behavior (3 hours)
- Cultural Awareness for Second Year Foster Parents (1 hour)
- Connecting Children and Parents through Visitation (1 hour)
- What to Know about Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking (1 hour)

KEEP: Keeping Foster and Kinship Parents Trained and Supported

Parents in the second year of approval may have the option to participate in the KEEP program. KEEP is an evidence-based support and skill enhancement education program for foster and kinship parents of children aged 4 to 12. The program supports foster and kinship families by promoting child well-being and preventing placement breakdowns.

KEEP Track

Foster parents (traditional or kinship) participating in the KEEP program during the second year of fostering must complete 22 hours of training:

- CPR & First Aid Refresher (4 hours)
- Medication Administration Refresher (2 hours)
- KEEP Completion (16 hours)

¹ During the second year of participation, the classroom course Working with the Education System may be substituted with the Foster Parent College online training Working with Schools. Participation in other online trainings will not be accepted.

KEEP encourages foster and kinship parents to change their child's behavior, teach effective management strategies, and provide their children with support. The aims of KEEP are:

- Increase the parenting skills of foster and kinship parents
- Decrease the number of placement disruptions
- Improve child outcomes
- Increase the number of positive permanency outcomes/options

The objective of KEEP is to provide effective tools for dealing with a child's behavioral and emotional problems, and to support parents in implementing these tools. This is accomplished through KEEP groups. KEEP groups include foster and kinship parents who attend 16 weekly 90 minute sessions based in the local community.

Additionally:

- Curriculum topics include framing the foster and kinship parent's role as that of key agents of change for the children placed with them. Foster and kinship parents are taught methods for encouraging child cooperation, using behavioral contingencies and effective limit setting, and balancing encouragement and limits.
- There are also sessions on dealing with difficult problems behaviors (including covert behaviors), promoting school success, encouraging positive peer relationships, and strategies for managing stress brought on by providing foster care.
- KEEP doesn't use a "one size fits all" curriculum. Each week, the KEEP group leaders gather specific information about the children's current behaviors by Parent Daily Reports (PDR). This information is then incorporated into the weekly sessions to make sure the group is both current and relevant.
- KEEP groups are designed to be flexible and fun. Snacks are served and childcare is provided. Unlike a classroom lecture format, KEEP groups are interactive and participatory. The group blends the real and current experiences of foster and kinship parents with lessons learned from research about the most effective parenting methods.

Training Requirements: Third Year and Following

Traditional Track

Parents following the traditional training track must complete 15 hours of training annually following the second year of foster parent certification:

- Biennial completion of CPR & First Aid Refresher (fourth year and every other year thereafter) (4 hours)
- Biennial completion of Medication Administration Refresher (fourth year and every other year thereafter) (2 hours)
- Elective trainings (15 hours, or 9 hours in years requiring CPR & First Aid and Medication Administration Refreshers)

KEEP Completion

Foster parents completing KEEP must complete 15 hours of training during their third year as foster parents:

- Fostering Positive Behavior (3 hours)
- Cultural Awareness for Second Year Foster Parents (1 hour)
- Connecting Children and Parents through Visitation (1 hour)
- What to Know about Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking (1 hour)
- Elective Training (9 hours)

Following the third year of foster parent certification, parents who have completed KEEP must complete 16 hours of elective training annually.

Approved Elective Training Options

Experienced foster parents have many available opportunities for completion of elective trainings. Parents may receive credit by completing any of the following:

- Classroom trainings offered by the Department of Children's Services and contract agencies
- Attendance of the Annual Foster Parent Conference (multiple opportunities over one weekend)
- Online through the Foster Parent College² (up to 7 hours annually)
- Classroom or individual trainings offered by local foster care associations
- Classroom or individual trainings offered by the Independent Living Staff
- Completion of books or videos from the approved list³ (up to 3 hours annually)

All other elective options must be approved by the Office of Learning and Development.

² <http://www.tn.gov/dcs/article/foster-parent-college-online>

³ http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/dcs/attachments/fpt_ApprovedMedia.pdf

Required In-Service Courses

Child Development: 2 hours

This workshop enables participants to have a better understanding of age-appropriate behaviors for the children they are parenting, as well as helps them identify behaviors that might indicate a problem. Participants also learn the stages of child and adolescent development. Finally, parents are able to explore how some forms of maltreatment affect a child's development.

Connecting Children and Parents through Visitation: 1 hour

This course will provide foster parents with a better understanding of: the federal and state mandates on child and family visitation; the importance of the child and family visitation and why supporting this contact is important to a child's developmental and mental well-being; how to identify the reasons for a child's behavior before during and after visitations; and how to strategically minimize these behaviors.

CPR & First Aid Refresher: 4 hours

This course, required for all foster parents every two years after approval, instructs participants in basic CPR and first aid skills that can sustain or save a life while professional emergency help is on the way. This training will make the home and work environment safer by preventing illness and injury as well as allowing parents to quickly recognizing and responding to emergencies.

Cultural Awareness for First Year Foster Parents: 1 hour

This 1-hour course allows foster parents to examine their own cultural backgrounds and beliefs about different cultures through self-assessment. The role that culture plays in a person's development and sense of identity will also be explored.

Cultural Awareness for Second Year Foster Parents: 1 hour

In this 1-hour workshop, parent, child, and social roles will be explored. Issues regarding communication and culturally-specific needs will also be introduced. By the end of the session, participants will have the opportunity to practice their cultural competence.

Required In-Service Courses

Fostering Positive Behavior: 3 hours

This course is an interactive DVD series which demonstrates best practice in behavioral problem-solving methods and highlights prohibited behavioral practices. Participants will learn how to apply principles of DCS work to specific issues of behavior management, how to approach the behavioral issues of children in state custody, and how to demonstrate effective behavioral problem-solving methods.

Helping Children Make Transitions: 3 hours

This course provides participants with information that will help them to work with children who are in transition. Understanding the issues faced by these children and their families as they move from one setting to another is the focus of this course. Techniques to help children through this time of trauma, with emphasis on maintaining significant relationships, are discussed.

Kinship Family Dynamics: 3 hours

Family Dynamics never remain the same. The dynamics are constantly shifting based on a number of factors including family members' differing communication styles, traditions, and changes in parental roles, such as the ones required when families become a kinship placement. This workshop allows participants to explore ways to adapt to the changes in the family dynamic as a result of a kinship placement.

Kinship Family Role Conflict: 3 hours

This workshop allows participants the opportunity to learn techniques to address role conflict within their family as a result of a kinship placement. Topics addressed in this course include how to work effectively with the birth parents and how to handle the stressors that can occur by becoming a kinship placement.

Medication Administration Refresher: 2 hours

This course is required for all DCS foster parents every two years after approval. This refresher course includes an update on medication administration policies and procedures. The course also provides an update on the knowledge to safely and effectively administer medications to children in care. Topics included in this class range from self- storage and disposal of medication to common errors in medication administration.

Required In-Service Courses

Parenting the Sexually Abused Child: 3 hours

This training addresses issues of coping with and responding to disclosures, managing sexual acting-out behaviors, developing family rules that are relevant to the sexually abused child, understanding myths and realities of sexual abuse, realizing the important role of therapy, and understanding potential outcomes for children who have been victimized.

Parenting the Youthful Offender: 9 hours

This course is required for all foster parents fostering delinquent youth. This class allows foster parents to explore the benefits of fostering a delinquent youth. Participants will gain knowledge helpful in assisting a delinquent youth in addressing challenging behaviors, delinquent behaviors, adolescent development, and transitioning to home or independent living placement.

What to Know about Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking: 1 hour

This course will equip foster parents with information and training about Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking. Foster parents will gain insight into the criminality of child exploitation and human trafficking while learning about the physical and psychological impact it has on children. Participants will learn about the importance of protecting and educating children about the dangers of being lured into this fast-growing illegal activity that is considered modern day slavery.

Working with Birth Parents: 3 hours

This course helps everyone involved in foster care gain an appreciation for the critical role of birth parents in the lives of children in care. Participants will have an opportunity to explore the impact that a child's history and visits with his/her parents have on behaviors.

Working with the Education System: 2 hours

This training will help foster parents to develop positive relationships with local school systems. Topics include obtaining and sharing the Education Passport (school records), navigating the special education process, consulting your Education Specialist, understanding DCS education policies, and collecting information for use in Child and Family Team Meetings.

Elective Classroom Courses

Creating Teachable Moments: 3 hours

This course was created to address the skills that youth need in order to navigate life in the direction of success. The tools youth need are easily obtained with the help of a significant personal connection who takes an interest in teaching them. This course will discuss the ways we work with our youth, which falls into two categories: teaching tangible skills such as problem solving, planning, decision-making, time management, communication, and interpersonal relations; and teaching intangible skills like cooking, budgeting, or how to get a summer job. Caregivers can provide these skills by creating teachable moments with youth. This material will help foster parents have a better understanding of the lasting impact they can have on a youth's future.

Engaging and Parenting Teens: 2 hours

This course will showcase the benefits of being a foster parent for teens and discuss adolescent development in relation to behaviors, identity, peers, and family and the relationship between interdependence and positive youth development.

Loving and Letting Go: 3 hours

This workshop will help foster parents address the grief and loss they experience when children in their homes return to their birth parents or other permanent placements. Techniques will also be provided on how to manage the stress that accompanies grief during the transition period of a foster child leaving the home.

Managing Crisis: 3 hours

This class prepares participants for the predictable periods of crisis that are a part of being a foster family. It helps the families to think about these difficult periods as opportunities for their families to grow closer and for family members to strengthen their commitment to one another. Participants are also given the opportunity to practice their crisis intervention skills through a team activity. They will develop their first preventive or proactive family plans and sharpen their skills for assessing their own family resources and strengths.

Elective Classroom Courses

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome/Safe Sleep for Infants: 3 hours

This course provides foster parents with information about NAS. Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome is a condition in which a baby has withdrawal symptoms after being exposed to certain substances. The kinds of medications that may cause withdrawal and how to parent babies with NAS will also be discussed. In addition, techniques on how to reduce your baby's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related causes of infant death will be reviewed.

Partnership in Action: 2 hours

This course will examine the meaning of partnership between DCS staff, foster parents, and birth parents as they work together toward the same goal. Participants will also learn how building relationships, respecting one another, and understanding roles can benefit team members.

Positive Discipline 2: 3 hours

This training revisits information on discipline that was discussed during PATH classes. Additional discipline techniques such as rewards, behavior modification, involving the child in behavior replacement, and natural consequences are explored.

Professionalism and Ethics: 1.5 hours

The training will allow participants to define professionalism and identify qualities expected of professionals. Participants will be able to recognize how foster parents are professional members of the team and become familiar with the Code of Ethics for Foster Parents.

Foster Parent College Courses

To enroll in the online Foster Parent College courses, please contact the DCS Training Specialist assigned to your region.⁴

ADHD/ADD/ODD: 2 hours

This course explores diagnosis and treatments of ADHD, ADD, and ODD, and discusses steps to help children with these disorders.

Anger Outbursts: 2 hours

This course covers temper tantrums, assaultive behavior towards other children, rage towards the mother, and erratic or unpredictable anger.

Anger Pie: 2 hours

Dr. Rick Delaney discusses how an understanding of the ABCs of behavior can help parents ward off angry outbursts.

Caring for Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused: 4 hours

Explores the emotional and behavioral effects of child sexual abuse on children in care and offers strategies to help overcome the challenges foster parents face.

Child Abuse and Neglect: 4 hours

A pre-service course designed for individuals interested in caregiving which focuses on child maltreatment. Learn about the characteristics, symptoms, and reporting standards for child maltreatment.

Child Development: 4 hours

Explores typical child development, developmental domains and stages, temperament and goodness of fit, and the effects of abuse and neglect on a child's health and behavior.

⁴ <http://www.tn.gov/dcs/article/foster-parent-college-online>

Foster Parent College Courses

Child Safety & Supervision: 2 hours

Michael F. Quinn, M.A., uses a professional child care worker's approach to child safety, providing foster parents with effective supervision strategies and tools for collecting background information, making in-home observations, and making supervision adjustments.

Child Welfare Team: 4 hours

Covers how the child welfare system works, purpose and goals of the system, key terms, and who the child welfare team members are, as well as their roles and responsibilities.

Childhood Anxiety Disorders: 2 hours

Viewers will learn to identify symptoms and causes of anxiety disorders in children, emotional symptoms, steps to take & treatment options.

Children with Autism: 2 hours

Dr. Robert Nickel addresses the many challenges parents of children with autism face, including social and communication deficits and common medical problems.

Cultural Issues in Parenting: 4 hours

Examines how parents can support children's cultural development and why that is important to their healthy growth and development.

Culturally Competent Parenting: 2 hours

Dr. Tanya M. Coakley discusses how culturally competent parenting can provide minority children an environment that respects and nourishes their sense of self.

Eating Disorders: 2 hours

Causes of and strategies for dealing with stealing and hoarding food, gorging, refusing certain foods, and anorexia are examined.

Foster Parent College Courses

Fire Setting: 2 hours

Fire-setting behaviors such as silent but deadly, impulsive, disturbed, accidental, and curious are examined in this course.

Foster Care to Adoption: 4 hours

Explores the process and challenges of moving from foster care to adoption and offers insight and advice for helping adoptive family members through those challenges.

Grief & Loss in the Foster Care System: 2 hours

Charley Joyce, LICSW, discusses grief and loss as it impacts foster children, birth parents, and foster caregivers.

House Safety: 2 hours

This course shows how foster parents can observe safety rules for licensed or certified residential care facilities using self-inspections.

Impact of Fostering on Birth Children: 2 hours

Explores the challenges foster families face pre-placement, during placement, and post-placement, and offers insights and advice for helping birth children through those challenges.

Kinship Care: 2 hours

Viewers will learn about family feuds, allegiance to birth parents, distance, and defiance with kinship family.

Lying: 2 hours

Common behaviors addressed in this course include getting out of trouble, gaining attention, pathological lying, and getting others in trouble.

Parent-Child Attachment: 4 hours

Covers the difference between healthy and unhealthy attachment, how separation and loss affect attachment, and how attachment theory applies to real life.

Foster Parent College Courses

Positive Parenting I: 2 hours

Viewers learn how to use cooperation, tracking behavior, and encouragement as parenting techniques.

Positive Parenting II: 2 hours

This course discusses setting limits and behavior contracts as positive parenting techniques.

Positive Parenting III: 2 hours

Strategies for using time-out, privilege removal, and assignment of extra chores to manage difficult behavior are discussed.

Reactive Attachment Disorder: 2 hours

Healthy and unhealthy attachment, the emotionally promiscuous RAD child, the hyper-vigilant RAD child, RAD & other diagnoses are discussed in this course.

Reducing Family Stress: 4 hours

Explores adding a foster child to the family and offers insight into how to preserve the family structure and reduce stress caused by a changing dynamic.

Relationships: Strengthening Communication: 4 hours

This course helps foster parent couples improve communication with each other, resolve conflicts in their relationship, and promote intimacy.

Running Away: 2 hours

Searching for roots, running from rules, running from love and intimacy, wanting to be wanted, and running to street crime.

Safe Parenting: 2 hours

Developing safety and treatment plans is discussed in the context of meeting state regulations and the individual child's needs.

Foster Parent College Courses

Self-Harm: 2 hours

This course examines self-injury, high-risk behavior, suicidal behavior, reckless accident proneness, and hair pulling.

Sexualized Behavior: 2 hours

This course examines obsessive sexual behavior, sexual behavior with siblings, seductive behavior towards adults, and public masturbation.

Sleep Problems: 2 hours

Viewers will learn about roaming, nightmares and night terrors, sleeping alone, and depression.

Stealing: 2 hours

Topics covered in this course include shoplifting, stealing based on envy or revenge, kleptomania, and stealing from loved ones.

Substance-Exposed Infants: 4 hours

Dr. Robert Nickel and Susan Edelstein, M.S., discuss the issues and challenges faced by parents who care for substance-exposed infants, including the effects of legal and illegal drugs, multiple substance abuse, working with the child's professional team, and successful parenting strategies.

Understanding Behavior in Foster Children: 4 hours

Explores problematic behavior in foster children and how foster parents can better understand the purpose of a child's behavior through careful observation.

Wetting and Soiling: 2 hours

Wetting as an emotional outlet, wetting as a self-defense, classic daytime or nighttime wetting, soiling and smearing feces, constipation, and withholding stools are discussed in this course.

Foster Parent College Courses

Working Together with Primary Families: 4 hours

Explores the benefits and challenges of building a working relationship between foster and primary families, and offers strategies for developing respectful, positive communication.

Working with Birth Parents I: Visitation: 2 hours

What to expect before, during, and after visitation with birth parents and strategies for helping the foster child transition back to their foster home are examined in this course.

Working with Schools: 2 hours

Roles and responsibilities, entering a new school, working with the school staff, special education, and parent advocacy are discussed in this course.

Approved Media

In addition to classroom opportunities and Foster Parent College, parents may also obtain training credit by reading books (2 credit hours) and watching videos (1 credit hour) that have been approved for credit by the Office of Learning and Development. A maximum of three (3) hours of training credit may be awarded annually for approved media.

View the complete list of approved books and videos on the [Foster Parent Training website](#).⁵

If you would like to received training credit for a title that is not listed, contact Parent Learning & Development for approval.

⁵ http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/dcs/attachments/fpt_ApprovedMedia.pdf